



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park
Backcountry Information Center

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Hiker Information Sheet

Travel in Grand Canyon National Park's backcountry has inherent risks and unavoidable hazards. Your safety depends upon your judgment, your experience, and a realistic assessment of your ability to travel safely. A successful and safe hike may depend on weather, routes, and unforeseen natural occurrences. Routes and trails are susceptible to deterioration due to rockslides and may become obscured. Extreme cold or heat can compromise an individual's ability to cope with the psychological challenges of backcountry travel. You must ensure that you have adequate food, water, and equipment to deal with the unexpected. If you have doubts as to your ability to hike safely in the Grand Canyon, do not attempt to do so! Do not assume that your travels in the backcountry will not develop into a serious situation. Be prepared to acknowledge the risks and the challenges of stepping below the rim in Grand Canyon National Park!

A lack of preparedness coupled with overconfidence can lead to injury and evacuation; disturbing of historical and ecological resources; infringement on each other's quality of experience; even citation, wasted vacation days, and outright suffering. Grand Canyon National Park requests detailed information on certain trips to help alleviate some of these unnecessary problems. This information is collected from most solo hikers, hikers traveling in remote areas during the summer, and hikers traveling more than 10 miles in a given day.

Please read this information and discuss the ramifications with other members of your group. If your group has the knowledge and experience to mitigate these challenges and if the itinerary requested still appears reasonable, then complete and return this form to the Backcountry Information Center. Don't hesitate to contact us with questions about alternative hiking possibilities at (928) 638-7875 Monday through Friday 1 to 5pm MST. If the phone line is busy, please send us an email at: grca_bic@nps.gov. Remember you are ultimately responsible for the safety of your entire group.

Heat. Throughout the summer, temperatures at the bottom of the canyon often exceed 105°F (40°C) in the shade. Between 10 am and 4 pm shade is almost nonexistent. Radiant heat from the sun blasts down, warming surfaces wherever it reaches. This heating force adds to the difficulty faced by the hiker's body in its attempt to cool itself. Large quantities of liquid and food must be consumed to replace abundant sweating and maintain a proper blood chemical balance. Sweat evaporates quickly and may not even be noticed. Dehydration and other heat-related illnesses are common and set in quickly. Even slight dehydration decreases mental ability and accidents become more common. The largest cause of heat-related illness is hiking between 10 am and 4 pm in the summer.

Distance and terrain. Hiking in the Grand Canyon is different from mountain hiking. The hike to the bottom involves descending more than 5,000 feet (1,524 meters) in elevation. The elevation change, combined with carrying a heavy backpack, is very hard on knees, ankles, feet, and toes. Blisters and traumatized toenails are common. The 5,000 foot (1,524 meters) hike out of the canyon occurs at the end of the hike when hikers are mentally and physically drained. Difficulty increases as hikers approach the top reaching elevations of 7,000 to 8,000 feet (2,134 to 2,434 meters). Distances in the canyon are deceiving due to the rugged terrain. People who choose aggressive hikes often end up camping short of their goal. This involves creating new sites, which damages sensitive ecological resources, or negatively impacts other campers by putting too many people in a confined space. It is important to carefully consider your route and be sure it is within your group's ability to safely complete the hike.

Scarcity of water sources. The list of perennial water sources is short. Finding your next water source may involve endless hours of travel and extra time on top of that to search the drainage for the water. It is not unusual to see experienced Grand Canyon hikers carrying several gallons of water (water weighs 8 pounds per gallon, 1 kilo per liter). Knowing how much water you will need and exactly where you can find more can be a matter of life and death.

Remoteness. In some areas of the canyon, hikers may not cross paths with any other humans. Hikers are responsible for their own safety and must be prepared to deal with emergency situations and know how to prevent them. No one else may be around to provide assistance.

Changing weather. Grand Canyon is known for drastic and quick weather changes. Extremely hot summer days may give way to chilling winds, rain, hail, or even snow. Cases of heat stroke and hypothermia have been reported on the same day.

Safety. You are responsible for the safety of your entire group. Arrange to check-in with your emergency contact(s) before and after your hike. Checking in and out is your responsibility. If you are carrying a satellite phone know your number. Inform your contact person how and when to contact park personnel in the event you do not check in as planned at the end of your hike. The park's 24 hour emergency phone number is (928) 638-7805. Be aware that rangers may be responding to other emergencies and unavailable to come to your aid. Be sure your group has the equipment and knowledge it needs to deal with emergencies and/or injuries.

Trip Leader Name _____ Reservation Number _____

Trailhead Vehicle Information

It is very important that trailhead vehicle information be accurate and complete.

Plate Number and State

Rental (yes/no)

Vehicle 1: _____

Vehicle 2:

Emergency Contact(s)

At least one emergency contact is required (you cannot be your own emergency contact). We strongly recommend you give your emergency contact(s) a copy of your itinerary, the names of all trip participants, and a list of any pertinent medical information (health conditions, medications, allergies) for all participants.

Name: _____ Phone(s): _____

Name: _____ Phone(s): _____

Trailheads

Beginning Trailhead: _____

Ending Trailhead:

Daily Itinerary Details (use additional pages if necessary)

	Date	Include daily mileage (very important), trail / route to be taken, camp location / use area
Night 1		
Night 2		
Night 3		
Night 4		
Night 5		
Night 6		
Night 7		

Equipment Carried: list gear (type and color), include packraft and technical gear used to descend slot canyons (ropes, anchors).

Remarks: please provide desert and/or Grand Canyon hiking experience.

Travel in Grand Canyon National Park backcountry has inherent risks and hikers assume complete responsibility for their own safety. Rescue is not a certainty. Backcountry users should be in good physical condition and should be able to survive on their own by taking the necessary precautions and equipment. Your safety is your responsibility.

Trip Leader's Signature _____ Date _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: A Federal Agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. This information is being collected to allow the park manager to make a valued judgment on whether or not to allow the requested use. All the applicable parts of this form must be completed.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public Reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time it takes for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form should be sent to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW (2601), Washington, D.C. 20240.